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Recent Swedish Theologians and Their Theology *

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III. LUNDENSIAN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION.

At the beginning of this century, as we have already noted, the theological center of Sweden was at the University of Uppsala, due mainly to the influence of Nathan Söderblom and Einar Billing. The year 1920 is rather important in the history of Swedish theology, for it was then that Billing became Bishop of Västerås, thus ending his academic career at Uppsala, and it was also about that time that the University of Lund came into theological prominence through the activity of Professor Gustav Aulen (professor at Lund from 1913 to 1933, now Bishop of Strängnäs). It is mainly through the efforts of Aulen, Anders Nygren (professor of systematic theology at Lund since 1924), and Ragnar Bring (at Lund since 1934) that there now exists a distinct type of Swedish theology, known as the Lundensian type or "school".

Lund, situated in the southernmost province of Sweden, has always maintained a close contact with German theology, but it never swung over to the extremes of German Liberalism. This was due, perhaps, to the fact that the theologians at Lund also had remained in close touch with the Swedish Church. The prevailing tendency with respect to the life of the Church was of a rather "high-churchly" character, and this tended to "soften" the Liberalism that came from Germany. Broadly speaking and correctly understood, the term "reaction" might be used to characterize the Lundensian type of theology, for it has come as a reaction both against the type of Liberalism that was prevalent at the turn of the century and shortly thereafter, and against extreme Barthianism. It is no doubt true that Aulen, especially in his younger years, showed some influences from Barth, but the Lundensians themselves would strongly deny that they are Barthians, and point to existing differences between their theology and that of Barth. The strength of Barth, so the Lundensians would affirm, lies in his negations rather than in any positive contributions. His theology follows the philosophical approach, while that of Lund purports to be entirely **religious** in approach and character. The Lundensians believe in a continuous revelation through history; they shun any Calvinistic stress on obedience, fearing that it might lead to workrighteousness, and stress that salvation is **sola gratia.** In these respects they differ from the Barthians. They are also more positive in their approach than Barth has ever been. Professor Nils Ferre sums up his impression of the Lundensian School in the following words:

"Lundensian theology is best understood as the resurgence of historic Christianity, as a reaction to the indefiniteness of a confused Liberalism which never won much more than the minds of its converts, and that only partially, and as an affirmation of the absolute assurance of religion in the face of a bewildered relativism" (Ferre: Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology, p. 23).

We are well aware of the fact that not all theologians would be willing to subscribe to this tribute to Lundensian theology, depending on respective points of view. It may be fair, however, to say that Ferre has described the aims and purposes which the theologians of Lund would recognize as their own and which they, in their own way, are earnestly seeking to realize and accomplish. In the following study we shall let these theologians speak for themselves; next we shall endeavor to present a summary of their position and then leave it to the reader to form his own conclusion as to the merit or demerit of the Lundensian type of theology. One thing is quite certain: the Lundensians are not following absolutely the Liberalism of a few decades ago, nor are they "reactionary" to the extent of going back to strict and scholastically orthodox conservatism, but have set out on a way distinctly their own.

Before dealing with the content of the theology under consideration it would perhaps be well to become somewhat familiar with its methodology, which we, therefore, first of all shall look at, very briefly indeed, from this point of view.

METHODOLOGY.

A GENERATION or so ago theology as a science was rather disdained in Sweden, and the time when it could be called the "queen of sciences" seemed definitely at an end. Natural sciences worked with methods and with an "exactness" that did not seem to obtain within theology. Other reasons, such as the general tendency of the times, may also have had something to do with this phenomenon. But whatever the reasons, the fact remains that theology as a science had suffered an "eclipse", and that this had its practical results in the then existing dearth of theological students. The Lundensians in particular were conscious of this fact and have done much to remedy the situation. They are anxious that theology be recognized as a science on a par with other branches of learning. Now science, to remain true to itself, must be descriptive, and so

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these theologians have adopted what may be called the historical-descriptive method.

As any science must have its field of activity and its given material with which to labor, theology too has its own particular field beyond which it cannot go if it is to remain theology. It also has its given material; and this, for the Lundensians, is the content of faith. In the very opening words of his *Den allmänneliga kristna tron* (The Catholic Christian Faith) Aulen states that "the object of systematic theology is the Christian faith. This discipline seeks, with every means at its disposal, to clarify the content and meaning of the Christian faith, a task which is analytical-critical in nature. It is neither demonstrative nor normative: its aim is not to present any 'proofs' for faith nor to endeavor to establish what must be believed. Everything concentrates itself around the task of how to understand faith itself and to let its own characteristic motifs and points of view stand forth with the greatest possible clarity" (Aulen: Op. Cit., p. 13).

Systematic theology, therefore, does not busy itself with the question of ultimate reality. This would not only be outside of its proper sphere, but the matter itself is not possible of any logical demonstration. Neither theology nor philosophy are able to present a satisfactory answer to this problem, for God cannot be made the object of scientific analysis. He is not an "object", among others, that can thus be measured and analyzed. For faith God is indeed all in all, but for analyzing theology the case is altogether different. Here the problem is to clarify the nature of our communion with God and, in keeping therewith, also clearly to set forth that concept of God which is inseparably connected with the Christian faith (Ibid. p. 14).

It follows naturally that if this be the aim and purpose of systematic theology, it will have very little or nothing in common with psychology of religion. The latter is interested in the religious subject, while the former, in its endeavor to understand faith, has its interest in the object of faith. This is seen, for instance, in dealing with the idea of forgiveness, where for theology the question is not so much that of a change in the inner life of the believer as that of a divine activity through which a communion between God and man is established (Ibid, p. 27).

What has been said regarding psychology is true also with respect to philosophy of religion. Aulen points out that there has been a great deal of misunderstanding in this matter. Philosophy of religion has been prone to enter into the field of systematic theology. In so doing it has not been free from a certain "superiority complex", in claiming ability to handle the subject of theology from a higher and more scientific point of view. It is not possible, however, to understand and evaluate religion from without and by the aid of any predetermined criteria. Instead of being objective such an approach becomes highly subjective, and the result is not a true interpretation, but a re-shaping of theology. Both the Enlightenment and the Idealism of the 19th century failed to grasp the essential element in religion because they both started from the wrong premises, endeavoring, as they did, to make Christianity conform to the predetermined pattern of a universal religion based on philosophical principles. It is possible for philosophy of religion to be of service to systematic theology, but it must in that case become a purely critical philosophy, and its aim would then be to establish and to describe the specifically religious category and to determine its position in relation to the spiritual life of man.

With rational metaphysics, on the other hand, the Lundensian theology will have nothing to do. It recognizes that there are elements in the Christian religion that defy rational explanation, and is not afraid to say so. Even in such elements there is a religious value and these are to be preserved, but no attempt is made rationally to comprehend and explain that which is of a metaphysical nature.

The proper task of systematic theology is well defined by Professor Ragnar Bring in his article "Recent Swedish Theology" in *ECCLESIA,* p. 70 ff., from which we give the following quotation to indicate his trend of thought: "Christianity is a concrete, historically given form of religion. No form of religious experience exists as a universal rational truth, but appears in historical, individualized form. It is possible, therefore, only to investigate the object of theology, namely faith, as something that is historically 'given'. In Christianity it is possible to find a center, and it is the task of theology to understand each part of faith in its organic relation to this center."

This leads us to a consideration of that which is most characteristic in Lundensian theology with respect to its methodology,

namely the *motivforskning*. This word itself is not easy to translate, and rather than merely seeking an English equivalent for this expression we must, in order to understand the problem at hand, endeavor to explain what the Lundensians understand by *motivforskning* in theology.

In *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalsskrift*, 1933, page 38 ff., Professor Nygren has an article entitled: "Systematisk teologi och motivforskning", which we recommend for further study, and to which we shall also refer in what we have to say on this subject.

Nygren introduces his article by asking the question, "What is the aim of systematic theology?" and goes on to show that in times past two answers have been given, answers that are very opposite in character and meaning. Speculative theology has maintained that the aim of systematic theology should be "to set forth the eternal ideas, liberated from the influence of time and history under which they exist in various historical religions". In other words, it should present and motivate a more or less universal or common religious concept. Systematic theology, if following that precept, would become a metaphysical philosophy of religion. The other answer has been given by the churchly-positivistic group of theologians, for whom the aim of dogmatics would be to set forth the accepted tenets of some certain Church or denomination.

Nygren claims that neither approach is satisfactory. The aim of any science is to understand the object of its research, and this speculative theology fails to do. The other group mentioned fares no better at his hands. The driving and compelling interest here is not that of the genuine scientist, but more so that of a desire to dogmatize and systematize each and every concept of faith. Speculative theology asks what ought to be accepted as general truths of religion; the other group seeks to identify what ought to be believed within a given denomination, what constitutes its normative theology.

In their approach to the problem under discussion the Lundensians differ from both of the methods we have mentioned above. Nygren states that "if regarding any science it is true it should seek to understand and to clarify its object, then the object of systematic theology can be none other than to understand and to clarify our Christian faith in its most characteristic aspects." In his great work *Eros and Agape* Professor Nygren takes up this idea again and

elaborates on it more fully. The sum total of the discussion may be presented in the following quotation: "We must come to an understanding of what constitutes the very basic conception, the compelling power in a given religious formulation, that which sets its stamp on the totality of the religion under discussion and makes possible that everything in it will have a specific meaning and coloring. That kind of research which aims at such a structural analysis —be it within the realm of religion or elsewhere—we label *motivforskning* (Nygren, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 17).

Motivforskning, then, may be defined as a search for that which defines the real structure of any phenomenon and gives to it its most characteristic aspect. In theology this would mean to isolate and investigate that which is most unique in the Christian religion. It would be an endeavor to determine what it is in Christianity that constitutes its very center and essence and characterizes it most clearly as a complete entity within itself. The task here, then, is to go back of existing forms of expression and find the underlying motifs.

We have dealt at some length with the subject of *motivforskning* and with methodology in general because it is quite impossible to understand and to appreciate Lundensian theology without being familiar with the manner in which it works, i.e. with its methodology.

The Lundensian theologians hold that they have actually found what the underlying motif in Christianity really is. It is the concept of love, or rather that of God as *agape*. Professor Nygren makes this clear in his monumental work *Eros and Agape*, and this idea also constitutes the basic factor in Aulen's *Dogmatics* as well as in his *Christus Victor*. In numerous articles and pamphlets the same idea is also propounded. We shall next endeavor to set forth their idea of God as *agape*. In so doing we follow mainly the outline of Aulen's "The Catholic Christian Faith", in which the author divides the material under these main headings:

1. The Divine Love
2. The Way of Divine Love
3. The Communion of Divine Love.

I. THE DIVINE LOVE.

Lundensian theology is at the same time Theo-centric and Christo-centric. It is Theo-centric in that it holds to the idea of God as basic and fundamental in all its presentations. It is interesting in this connection to note that Aulen, for instance, devotes a volume to the discussion of *Gudsbilden* (The Picture of God)—an expression that is more telling than our English term "The Concept of God."

This theology is also Christo-centric because it desires to know no other God than the One revealed in Christ. The Christ-deed is the all important in respect to revelation, but this is not only to be thought of as a now completed historical event. It continues in the present as a dynamic and dramatic self-disclosure of God, also that in and through Christ. To indicate this trend of thought we quote Aulen: "The picture of God held by the Christian faith is, as to its inner quality, stamped and characterized by the Christ-deed. This means that faith here finds a God who seeks and comes into contact with sinful man, or, in other words, finds a divine love that breaks the bonds within which rationality and legalism would place our relationship to God. It is in this power of (divine) love that we find the basic motif of Christianity" (Aulen: *Den allmänneliga kristna tron,* p. 160).

When Christian faith concentrates on Christ it must remember that in Him God was incarnated, that He is of the same essence as the Father. Then its idea of God must also be determined by what it finds in Christ; otherwise, says Aulen, our Christology would be nothing but empty forms. This means, then, that our picture of God is altogether one of *love.* "The last and highest word concerning the God who acts in the Christ-deed is the word regarding His *agape.* The nature of God, as Luther says, is *eitel Liebe* (Ibid. p. 159).

He further defines the nature and character of the *agape* of God in the following way: "The uniqueness of this love exists in its spontaneity and in its self-giving. Divine love has no other motive than itself, and its intrinsic quality is determined by the fact that it is a 'cross-marked' love" (Ibid. p. 160).

Whatever we say concerning God is therefore a statement regarding His love. No other divine "attributes" can be placed by the side of *love.* When we speak of the holiness, the power, the

majesty, or the judgment of God, we really speak of His love. "God is *agape",*—this is the sum total of the teachings of John, who says directly that God is Agape; and of Paul, who proclaims that "nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Other great religious leaders, notably Luther, have also had much to say concerning God as *love.* Aulen points to the fact that for Luther the law signified God's *opus alienum*—His "strange work", and the gospel expressed His *opus proprium*—His "proper work". Luther indeed has serious words to say regarding the wrath of God; but love, nevertheless, for him characterized the nature and the essence of God.

It is not possible rationally to explain why God loves. The only thing that can be said concerning the love of God is that it is spontaneous and unmotivated. It is the nature of God to love; with this we must be satisfied, according to Aulen and Nygren. The love of God is value-indifferent and is not motivated by the worth of its object. It is a self-giving love, which means that God not only gives good gifts to us, but that above all He also gives Himself. It is a love that seeks not its own, but the good of its object. It is therefore also a love that is creative, especially in establishing a fellowship between God and man.

In speaking thus of God as *agape* the Lundensians are anxious that they be not misunderstood. There are those who have maintained that the righteousness and holiness of God would lose their significance by this emphasis on love, but this the theologians of Lund would sharply deny. God is in constant conflict with the powers that oppose His will, and this, negatively stated, is expressed by His hatred, His wrath, His retributive righteousness, and the like. Underlying all this and amalgamating all the "attributes" of God is the very essence of His nature, His *agape,* but this is not an *agape* that would overlook sin and evil. On the other hand it is in a constant struggle against these forces, inasmuch as it is a love that is pure and holy. "The Father is at the same time also the never compromising Judge" (Aulen: Op. Cit., p. 167).

There is therefore a "tension" within God Himself—seemingly so at least—depending, perhaps, on the fact that we do not properly understand the purity of His love; but there can never be any dualism between the righteousness and the love of God. The former guards love from becoming mere sentimentality, and the latter pre-

cludes that righteousness should lose its own particular uniqueness. Righteousness without love, according to Aulen, is not righteousness, but harshness and severity. Again this is a concept which reason is not able to grasp, but it finds its "explanation" in the rather paradoxical statement that it is nothing else than divine love itself which constitutes the only sovereign power in the universe. By this it is possible to understand the omnipotence of God, both in His providence and in His relation to evil. He does and wills nothing else than that through which His divine love can realize itself. In relation to evil this divine omnipotence expresses itself as grace and as judgment. Through grace evil is overcome and is made to serve the purposes of the will of God; in the judgment of condemnation, that evil which is not overcome by grace also meets divine omnipotence. The power of divine love alone is the power of life. To be separated from this is doom and destruction, to be united with it means life eternal (Ibid. p. 179).

In the fact, then, that God is love we have, according to Lundensian theology, the center and basic motif of Christianity.

2. THE WAY OF DIVINE LOVE.

Divine love, as we have noticed, is both self-giving and creative of fellowship. It seeks man; if it were not for this fact, there could be no communion between God and man. Before God man is altogether a sinner; in this respect there is no room for any relativity along the lines of Scholasticism, which classified sins as either "deadly" or "venial". Sin, according to Lundensian theology, does not consist in more or less isolated deeds, but in the perverted will that hinders man from realizing his true goal (Aulen: Op. Cit. p. 289). Neither is it possible for the Christian faith psychologically so to divide man that he would possess a lower part, in which sin would have its *locus,* and also a higher part, his spiritual self, outside the realm of sin. Before God and *in loco justificationis* there is room for only the totalitarian point of view. On the one side there is nothing but man's sin, and on the other nothing but the grace of God (Ibid. p. 319).

Here we meet another very important aspect of Lundensian theology, namely its stress on the fact that man is totally guilty before God. In and by himself man is entirely worthless. He is

ego-centric—*incurvatus in se,* as Luther put it—and absolutely unable to take the initiative in the way of salvation. Idealism and humanism are not countenanced in the least by the Lundensians. Man, instead of being able to raise himself to any higher level, is before God only a *massa peccatis.*

It is evident, then, that if man is to be saved, not only the initiative but the entire process of salvation must emanate from God. This is also set forth by the theology of Lund in most bold relief and is a constantly recurring theme in the writings of this group. Nygren presents this in his *Eros and Agape* and in his briefer work *The Reconciliation.* It is also the theme of Aulen's *Christus Victor,* and Erling Eidem sets forth the same idea in his volume *The Suffering God,*—to mention but a few of the authors who deal with this subject.

In discussing the subject of the atonement, Gustav Aulen in his book *Christus Victor* deals with the problem first of all from the historical point of view, seeking to ascertain how this idea has been understood and formulated throughout our Christian history. In so doing he finds that all existing concepts of the atonement can be classified into three distinct types, which he terms respectively the "Classical", the "Latin" and the "Subjective".

According to the Latin type God is rather distant, and in order that man may be forgiven there must be a proper satisfaction rendered. This is achieved by Christ *qua homo.* According to this type the legal order is unbroken, for the satisfaction is offered by Christ as man, the sinless Man in behalf of sinners (Op. Cit. p. 163).

In the Subjective type the atonement is really accomplished by man through his conversion and moral betterment. Here Christ becomes the perfect Example, the Ideal Man, and the Head of the race of the saved. God is now at a still greater distance, and the emphasis is not on the movement of God to man, but on man's movement toward God.

The terms "Classical" and "Dramatic" as descriptive of one approach to the idea of the atonement may be of recent origin, having first been used in this connection by Aulen in his *Christus Victor,* published in 1930; but the author affirms that the concept described by these terms is as old as Christianity itself.

According to this theory Christ is looked on as the Conqueror who overcomes all the forces of evil: sin, death, the devil; the law

and the wrath of God. This is altogether a work of divine love. It is the activity of God in Christ, and it is through the Cross that this work reaches its culmination. God hereby establishes a reconciliation between Himself and man; but here we must note that God is the subject of the activity referred to, He is reconciled in that He reconciles. In this respect the fact of the incarnation also receives its full import and meaning. There is a discontinuity in the order of merit and legal justice, but a continuity of divine operation. If this seems confusing, it may be stated in another way by saying that according to the Classical theory the idea of salvation always has a positive character. It aims to portray the atonement purely as a work of God, as a "movement of God to man". It seeks to present God as personally and actively engaged in the deliverance of man. God is in conflict with the powers of evil, and His victory results in reconciliation, in the salvation of man. This involves a double tension or opposition: first, that of God against all evil, and secondly, that which exists between divine love and divine wrath. It is impossible logically to explain what actually takes place in the atonement, but this much can be said that divine love prevails against and overcomes all enemies; the blessing overcomes the curse, but only at the cost of divine self-oblation and suffering.

The victory of Christ is not only something that has taken place once for all in the past; it is a continuous victory, constantly repeated in the realm of human souls, where it also is made effectual through the work of the Spirit.

Aulen maintains that this idea of the atonement is that of early Christianity; hence he terms it the "Classical" theory. It is found in the writings of the New Testament and in many of the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Fathers. Later it was modified and finally superseded by the Latin theory, which found its culmination in Anselm. With Luther, Aulen claims, there is a revival of the Classical idea. He again sees the atonement as a mighty drama, a conflict between Christ and the "Tyrants". This is seen most clearly from Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Creed, where he speaks on this wise: "Christ—who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil." Accordingly Christ is our Lord, not because He has rendered a satisfaction *qua homo,* but because He has *qua Deo* delivered us from our enemies

and through reconciliation placed us in a new relationship to the Father.

When the full floodlight of scientific investigation has been focused on the Patristic Age, we shall find, so Aulen believes, that our common interpretation of Christology as well as that of the atonement rests on the presuppositions of nineteenth century theology rather than on an objective and unprejudiced analysis of the position of the New Testament and that of the early Fathers.

There has been an unusually close co-operation between Aulen and Nygren, and it is not surprising therefore that both of them approach the idea of the atonement from the same point of view. That man is unable to rise into communion with God and that the initiative for man's salvation rests altogether with God, is the proposition that Nygren desires to prove in his two-volume work *Eros and Agape.* It would not be possible for us in this connection to take up this comprehensive work for any detailed investigation, and we must be satisfied with only a few hints as to the trend of thought therein contained.

Nygren recognizes two main and distinct motifs that have entered very deeply into the shaping of our Christian thinking. The one is represented by *eros* and the other by *agape.*

The *eros* motif, picturing man as rising, mainly by his own efforts, into communion with the deity, has entered Christianity from ancient Hellenism by way of Neo-Platonism. Plato was the first to formulate this idea, teaching that man belongs to two worlds; to the lower world of nature and to the upper world of the ideal. Between these two worlds there is only one way of communication: the upward way of the soul. Aristotle too has labored with the same concept. With him also *eros,* or the "rising tendency", bridges the gap between matter and form, and the *eros* principle in reality becomes the driving and compelling force of the universe. As to its intrinsic quality *eros* is ego-centric and desiring. Its *terminus a quo* is man's need and its *terminus ad quem* is the corresponding satisfaction which is found when the soul has ascended into fellowship with God. This may be accomplished by means of some heroic and ascetic struggle or by the more mystical way of sublime vision or ecstatic enjoyment. *Agape,* on the other hand, is the spontaneous, unmotivated, and absolutely sovereign love of God. This is free from all ego-centric considerations and value indifferent. As *eros*

is self-seeking, *agape* is self-giving; and in respect to salvation it is not a question of man ascending into fellowship with God, but of God descending to establish communion with man on his own level. This *agape* of God is revealed most fully on Calvary, in the complete self-sacrifice of Christ in behalf of sinful man.

Nygren shows that in Christianity these two motifs have at times been unduly mixed. In Augustine they were united to form the concept of *caritas*. God's way to man was complemented by man's effort to rise to God. In Luther and the Reformation Nygren sees a return to the *agape* motif. Luther rejected both the way of the law and that of meritorious performance as means by which to obtain salvation. The *sola gratia* and the *sola fide* express the idea involved in the *agape* principle.

Rather than to follow the discussion any further, we shall now present Nygren's own summary of the meaning of and the essential differences between these two basic motifs:

Eros is a desire of good for the self.	*Agape* is self-giving.
Eros is man's effort to ascend.	*Agape* comes down from above.
Eros is man's way to God.	*Agape* is God's way to man.
Eros is man's achievement, the endeavor of man to achieve salvation.	*Agape* is a free gift, a salvation which is the work of divine love.
Eros is ego-centric love, a form of self-assertion of the highest, noblest, sublimest kind.	*Agape* is unselfish love, which 'seeketh not its own', and freely spends itself.
Eros seeks to gain its life, a life divine, immortal.	*Agape* lives by God's life, and therefore dares to 'lose it'.
Eros is a will to have and to possess, resting on a sense of need.	*Agape* freely gives and spends, for it rests on God's own richness and fullness.
Eros is primarily human love, and God is the object of *eros*.	*Agape* is primarily God's own love, for God is *agape*.
Eros, when it is applied to God, is a love fashioned after the pattern of human love.	*Agape*, when it appears in man, is a love that takes its form from God's own love.
Eros is determined by and dependent on the quality of its object, its beauty and value; hence it is not spontaneous, but 'caused', called forth by the value of its object.	*Agape* is sovereign and independent with regard to its object, and is poured out on 'the evil and the good'; hence it is spontaneous, 'uncaused', and bestows itself on those who are not worthy of it.
Eros recognizes value in its object, and therefore loves it.	*Agape* loves, and creates value in its object.

3. THE COMMUNION OF DIVINE LOVE.

An important trend in modern Swedish theology, whether Lundensian or not, is its renewed interest in and emphasis on the Church. Bishop J. A. Eklund of Karlstad was the real pioneer in this "rediscovery" of the place and meaning of the Church in relation to the religious life of the people of Sweden. He spoke and wrote concerning this his "discovery", but he also did what was perhaps of still greater importance: he composed hymns on the theme of the Church, hymns which are now loved and sung by the church people of Sweden.

Also others soon saw the rich possibilities contained in the idea of the Church, and before long we find this slogan in use: *Sveriges folk—ett Guds folk* (The people of Sweden—a people of God). Students at the universities were gripped by a new enthusiasm for the Church, and this resulted in the organizing of a so-called "crusade" for the purpose of hastening the realization of the slogan referred to above. The results of this crusade are still discernible both within the Church as an institution and in the religious life of the people as a whole.

The concept of the Church plays an important part also in Lundensian theology. In order to present as full a picture as possible of this theology within the space allotted to us, we shall at least point to some of the most cardinal principles set forth by the Lundensians in this connection.

In his definition of the Church Aulen maintains that faith in the Church is not a faith in a holy institution, nor in "holy" individuals, but a faith in God who through His Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies. The Church is the communion created by the Holy Spirit (Aulen: *Den allmänneliga kristna tron*, p. 357). Christian faith must be altogether Theo-centric; it cannot be divided so as to have a number of "objects". It cannot be partly a faith in God and partly a faith in the Church. The Christian

confession, therefore, of one holy, Catholic Church expresses something essential regarding the way in which divine love realizes itself in the life of man; it is a confession concerning God as He is active in creating the Christian fellowship through the Holy Spirit.

Aulen differentiates between the "body" and the "soul" of the Church. To the former belong institutions and organizations, but these are not of primary importance. As to its soul, the Church is a "life communion" created by the Spirit, it is the "communion of saints". This does not mean that the Church constitutes an exhibition gallery where perfect "saints" are on parade. The holiness of the Church is not founded on the perfection and holiness of men, but on the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. In this fellowship man is *simul justus et peccator,* but in it God is also constantly active, forgiving and sanctifying. Here is not a question of our own holiness or that of the Church, but of the fact that in the Church we possess powers that sanctify (Aulen: *Den allmänneliga kristna tron,* p. 362).

The Church indeed lives and works in this world, but it is not therefore of the world. Its holiness places us before that which is super-worldly, eschatological, in nature. Thus the Church is vastly more than just an organization alongside of a number of other organizations. While it must not lose sight of its obligations to constitute a salt in the world, it can, nevertheless, not abandon itself to any dreams of a social Utopia.

Both the oneness and the catholicity of the Church are founded in the oneness and catholicity of the Spirit. "The catholicity of the Church is an expression for the universality of the victory of divine love in and through Christ, for the universality of the reconciliation, for the accessibility of forgiveness, and for the open arms of the Father" (Ibid p. 363).

An "individualistic" Christianity, separated from the Church, would be a *contradictio in adjecto,* for it is within the Church that a life of faith is born and nourished, and in this sense it is true that outside the Church there is no salvation. Faith does not find Christ outside of or beside the Church, but within this communion. The Church, therefore, does not exist as an entity in and by itself. It is God's kingdom of grace within which the Spirit is constantly active through the means of grace, which, as far as we are concerned, also are the constitutive factors of the Church.

CONCLUSION.

It would be rather difficult to present a *comprehensive* estimate of the theology we have sought to describe; nor is this, perhaps, to be a part of our present task. In our presentation we have endeavored to let the Lundensian theologians speak for themselves without any attempt at a critical analysis on our part.

The criticism has been advanced that present-day Lundensian theology is too academic, and that it therefore lacks a real contact with life. The very opposite criticism has also been leveled against it. Ferre, for instance, in his *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology,* p. 241, accuses the Lundensians of having an "anti-intellectualistic background." W. M. Horton characterizes the Lundensian theology as a "theology of the Resurrection" *(Contemporary Continental Theology,* p. 168), and he bases this statement on the fact that the proponents of this type of theology take their stand in the light that emanates from the risen and victorious Christ. While they are rejoicing in the love of God, making possible our present salvation, they are also looking for still greater victories to come.

Thus we see how opinions differ with respect to the nature and character of the theology under consideration. It certainly would not be acceptable to the kind of Liberalism that was in vogue a couple of decades ago. Humanism and Idealistic Theology would reject its approach as well as its emphasis, and it may be that strict Lutheran conservatism would also call it into question.

For these reasons it seems safe at least to say that the Lundensians have sought to strike out a new path. In their *motivforskning* they have made an important contribution to the science of theology. This type of theology does not deal with superficialities, but seeks to enter into the very depth of Christian thinking. Nygren, in particular, has rendered theology an invaluable service through his study of the *agape* concept, and his volumes on the subject give evidence both of long and painstaking labor and of clarity of thinking. He is masterful also in the lucidity of his presentation.

Lundensian theology is still in its youth. It has, in its own way, broken important ground in the theological field, but has not yet spoken its last word. What the nature of its future contributions will be is, of course, impossible to predict. One thing, however, is sure: this school of theology merits our attention, whether we agree with it in all details or not. It has succeeded in placing theology on a high level as far as Sweden is concerned, and in so doing it has also created a distinct Swedish type of theology.